## Natural Suburban Ecosystems Working Group

Preliminary List of Recommendations

#### **Participating Members**

- Nancy Dinsmore
- Cynthia Kapphahn
- Marn-Yee Lee
- David Oliver
- Esperanza Sanz
- Liz Snyder (Full Circle Farm)
- Cheryl Woodward
- Guest speakers/contributors from Mountain View Trees, California Native Plant Society, Save our Open Space, Don Edwards Environmental Center, Bubb School Gardening Committee

#### Mission

■ Foster a healthy, diverse, and interconnected ecosystem / web of life within Mountain View, by involving all types of public and private properties in the effort to maximize the areas within Mountain View that are devoted to tree cover, habitat restoration, local food production, & biodiversity.

#### Goals

- Enhance natural ecosystem elements that can reduce greenhouse gases (e.g. trees as a form of carbon sequestration and locating trees to reduce buildings' cooling costs and energy use), improve air quality and reduce pollution levels
- Create more sustainable, biodiverse natural ecosystems through habitat creation and restoration in a variety of land use areas (home, businesses, schools, roadways, parks, salt marshes, etc.),
- Promote gardening practices that are less toxic, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and conserve valuable resources such as water,
- Affirm the role of local agriculture in reducing fossil fuel consumption, and creating healthier food options for our population and more balanced local ecosystems, consistent with our goals of sustainability.

### Why bother?

- Working with nature generally takes less energy and toxins than fighting against it
- Natural checks and balances exist within ecosystems
- Biodiversity enhances long term stability, making local environments less susceptible to disease and destruction
- Nature provides powerful tools in effort to reduce global warming

#### "It's not nice to fool Mother Nature"







#### **Benefits of Trees**

- Urban Forests Improve Our Air Through:
  - Carbon Sequestration:
  - Reduction of Pollutants and Air Quality Enhancement
- Urban Forests Protect Our Water
- Urban Forests Save Energy
  - Could reduce our nation's consumption of oil by 500,000 barrels of oil/day.
- Extend the Life of Paved Surfaces
- Increase Traffic Safetys
- Improve Economic Sustainability
  - Attract businesses and tourists, people linger and shop longer along tree-lined streets.
  - Apartments and offices in wooded areas rent more quickly, have higher occupancy
  - Workers are more productive and absenteeism is reduced.
- Affect Consumer Perceptions and Behaviors
- Add Aesthetic Value
- Increase Real Estate Values
- Have Sociological Benefits
- Health benefits

### # 1 Maximize tree coverage

- Increase funds for city street trees
- Increase staff to monitor compliance w/ tree protections, enlist volunteers to assist
- Create fund for maintaining heritage trees
- Require trees in all revised parking lots
- Set goal for trees in city & provide a way (e.g. website) for people to give feedback to city when they have planted trees,
- Have award for church/school w/ most native trees or carbon or pollution reducing trees
- For city trees, focus on ones that reduce carbon or pollution, or increase habitat

#### # 1 Maximize tree coverage

- Require new development to have a significant amount of trees,
- Partner with MV trees for more tree planting in the city, work on more residential programs to plant new trees in higher density housing – townhomes and apartment complexes
- Protect our trees and create a network of volunteer tree amigos who can monitor the growth of newly planted trees and report any incidents of harm done to them
- Create pedestrian friendly streetscapes with trees as an important design consideration for all infill development and redevelopment projects

### # 2 Minimize toxins in our local environment

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- Use integrated pest man at all public sites (city, schools, parks, etc.
- Encourage use of integrated pest management on private property
- No cosmetic use of pesticides or herbicides
- Other possibilities?

## # 3 Minimize water use for plant-related cosmetic purposes

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- Use native or drought tolerant plants for public areas
- Minimize grass unless required for specific purposes such as playing fields, dog runs, or picnic areas
- For areas that require grass, use drought tolerant species
- Use recycled water for city irrigation
- Encourage home grey water use

## # 4 Maximize restoration of natural waterways through and within Mountain View

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- Return concrete waterways to natural streambeds, for better flood control and habitat restoration
- Work w/ Save our Streams to restore local streams
- Partner w/ SCVWD to restore rivers
- Support Cargill ponds restoration of natural marshlands

## # 5 Maximize local food production within Mountain View



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- Partner w/ local community groups to use school sites for food production and education
- Identify potential community garden sites,
   especially near areas of high density housing
- Survey other local areas that could be used for small scale local food production

# # 6 Maximize small and large scale habitat preservation, restoration & creation within Mountain View

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- Get city certified with National Wildlife Federation as a Community Wildlife Habitat
- Get city certified as butterfly migration stop w/ Monarch watch
- Get city certified as migratory bird stop
- Encourage homeowners, landlords, businesses, churches, and other community organizations to have individual sites also certified with these wildlife and habitat restoration programs
- Support SCVWD flood basin project @ Cuesta park, if the environmental impact statement to be completed in July finds this project will favorably impact wildlife habitat
- Permit and promote living roofs

## # 7 Make impact on the environment a top priority in planning decisions



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- Require environmental impact reports prior to hearings and the granting of permits
- Require habitat preservation and creation (a percentage) with all new building permits

## # 8 Sustainable Gardening Training Program

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- Train local garden workers & youth in methods of environmentally healthy gardening (and other eco-friendly trades),
- Have certification programs and a database of individuals w/ those skills

## # 9 Preserve & enhance species biodiversity within Mountain View

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- Educate the community regarding the importance of fostering a healthy, diverse, and interconnected ecosystem / web of life within Mtn View
- Have community-wide programs to protect species at risk, promote beneficial species, and enhance local habitats
- Incorporate species and habitat protection into planning process